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THE INAUGURATION

By Felix Morley

What did it portend -- that great inaugural parade which for over three hours streamed its seven-mile length through the heart of the national capital on January 20, 1949? What, if anything, was the historical significance of this undoubtedly impressive combination of pomp and pleasantry?

Quite a few spectators -- though the crowd was smaller than was expected -- must have asked themselves those questions. Even in Washington there are a number of mature people. Not all who lined Pennsylvania Avenue went like children to witness a Roman triumph, or the spectacle of a coronation. Nearly everybody likes a parade. But there are always some who like to know what is being paraded.

Actually there were two parades, uneasily blended into one, when Harry Truman was initiated into his first elected term as President. One of these demonstrations was traditionally American. It found place in the homely pageantry of the floats; in the obvious local pride and the appealing native whimsy of the various state delegations.

Regardless of age or circumstance, everybody laughed at the tobacco auctioneer, rattling his seeming gibberish into a microphone on the Kentucky float. Everybody applauded the trained Dalmatian dog, who tumbled and begged his way from Capitol to White House. Equally appealing was the little boy who proudly rode his Shetland pony in the midst of the "Southern Maryland Riding Club", complete to stagecoach.

There were merry shouts and squeeks when pretty girls threw oranges to the spectators from the gleaming Florida float. There was great glee when, through some happy blunder, a big limousine labelled "Supreme Court" crawled by, completely empty except for chauffeur. There were gasps of sympathy for the bosomy young lady in chilly decollete evening dress on the Illinois float. And none except the marshalls missed the frosty point when, a minute later, she was followed by a car with a banner announcing "Lieutenant Governor Shivers".

But over all this home-brewed circus streamed an unending armada of perfectly aligned airplanes. The roar of the huge bombers drowned out the efforts of the gay-colored Danbury Hatters Band. There were no eyes for the pathetic trio of three forlornly feathered Indians when a formation of fifty or more jet fighters streaked wing-to-wing overhead. At these implications, others than Lieutenant Governors shivered.

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And always, to stop the frivolity, came the interpolations of the military note; the tramping troops; the federalized college units, doing their best to look like soldiers; the sadly mechanized "cavalry", filling the streets with fumes of gas; the jeeps, the tanks, the half-tracks, the motorized artillery and other samples of that appalling weight of armor which the income tax so groaningly supports.

II

At the head of the parade, right after the motorcycle police who struggled manfully to preserve an H and a T alignment, rode the courageous captain who has those rectilinear initials. Applause was generous, and at least equally so for the old-time circus calliope which closed the procession with a weary tootling of "I'm Just Wild About Harry". The louder that lyric is blared, the more inappropriate it becomes. For the one emotion this President does not arouse, does not seek to arouse, and never could arouse, is wild enthusiasm.

As the calliope mechanically brayed this synthetic praise the mind of at least one spectator groped back in Roman history to that strange interlude when the republic was dead, although the outward forms of representative government were still for a time preserved. It was the great Augustus, grandnephew of Julius Caesar, one recalls, who worked out the formula. He refused the title of Emperor but ruled autocratically under the title of Princeps, or leader. As Gibbon puts it:

> "Caesar had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his power as by his power itself. . . . The title of King had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation that the Senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble Senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or even by the prudence, of the successors of Augustus."

The Roman ruler whom the calliope somehow brought to mind was, of course, Marcus Cocceius Nerva, who as a young man for a time commanded a cavalry squadron, perhaps designated by the letter "D", and who then served in the Senate before his election as Princeps after Domitian's death. Of Nerva, who was inaugurated in A. D. 96, one historian (H. W. Household) has written:

> "There was nothing great about Nerva. He was mild and inoffensive; his intentions were excellent and he did not lack good sense; but he was weak. The transition from a Domitian to a Nerva was too abrupt."

Or, in the words of another scholar (Cyril E. Robinson):

> "Nerva -- already past sixty at the time of his accession -- was essentially a gentleman. . . . by character cour-

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teous, conscientious and self-effacing, but scarcely a strong personality. . . . Nerva was not without courage . . . Yet the liberty of which he boasted was no better than a sham. . . . He and his successors were as thoroughgoing autocrats as ever Domitian had been, and the truth is that the aristocracy, at least inwardly convinced that the Principate was inevitable, were prepared to offer their co-operation as a graceful return for being let down so lightly."

III

President Truman's inaugural parade, with its uncoalesced manifestations of homespun pageantry and imperial power, recalled the time of Nerva, the last Roman ruler to whom the adjective "elected" is at all applicable. There is much the same sense of transition in Washington now as was presumably present in Rome then. And there are many other striking parallels.

For instance, Mr. Truman's inaugural address, with its virtual declaration of war against the barbarian empire which challenges the might of modern Rome. This speech showed how far the transition has already gone; how difficult will be the task of saving the Republic which, when abandoned in Rome, was in that case lost without recourse.

What Mr. Truman promised, doubtless sincerely, at his inauguration, is contradictory and confusing. How, for instance, can we "give unfaltering support to the United Nations" by forming within it a military alliance openly directed against a fellow-member of UN? By its initial catering to Communism, the United Nations was doomed to failure from the start. HUMAN EVENTS morosely said so when the Dumbarton Oaks draft Charter made the eventual outcome obvious. But the fatal blunder is not rectified by the present pretense that a war-breeding alliance within UN will somehow mysteriously "support" UN.

It makes equally little sense to say unctuously that "we should foster capital investment" abroad at a moment when capital investment "in areas needing development" is being officially discouraged at home. This is not an auspicious moment to talk lightly about "guarantees to the investor" who sends his money to China or Peru. What guarantees is the 81st Congress going to offer to venture capital within the Union?

The President further assures the American people that "the old imperialism, which he defines as "exploitation for foreign profit", has no place in his four-point program. Again he is mistaken. The program outlined on Inauguration Day, starting with an old-fashioned military alliance against Russia, is essentially imperialistic. It alters nothing to add, with a note unusually off key for Mr. Truman, that: "our allies are the millions who hunger and thirst after righteousness".

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One value in history is that it penetrates the pathetic pretenses with which those in authority seek to justify the abuse of power mistakenly surrendered to them by the people. Thus history calls Marcus Cocceius Nerva an emperor, although he carefully refused to describe himself as Imperator.

And history is justified in giving Nerva the imperial title which he eschewed, because after Nerva's brief reign there was never again an opportunity to restore the Roman Republic. Not that the period of personal rule which ensued was unhappy for the Common Man. He enjoyed a full century of bread and circuses -- for change was slower in those days -- before enlightened autocracy degenerated into the military dictatorships which in turn preceded the complete collapse of Rome.

But the period from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus -- a period ushered in by Nerva's election to the purple, is seen in retrospect as one of deepening twilight. The power of the State was steadily increased; the virtue of the citizens as steadily declined. And, as Warde Fowler sums up this prelude to disaster:

> "From Marcus Aurelius onwards the strain of self-defense was too great to allow of progress in any social or political sense. The monarchy became more absolute, the machinery of government more complicated; the masses were overtaxed, and the middle classes ruined."

The parade up Pennsylvania Avenue last week was really two parades: one Republican, the other Imperial. But the Imperial dominated. About midway, sandwiched pathetically between some regiments, there walked a figure of the traditional Uncle Sam. He looked bewildered, and no wonder. One felt of him as of a veteran of the Civil War -- yet another inauguration and his place will see him no more. Like the disappearing Indians, Uncle Sam too will be elbowed out. And that will be sad.

For Uncle Sam, that droll and homely symbol of the old Republic, is too individualistic for a Caesarian triumph. The old gentleman does not take kindly to mass production and his shambling gait cannot goose step with marching men and prancing girls. If disciplined, concentrated power is what we seek, then the old Uncle should doff his foolish clothing, don uniform and hide his lanky body within a tank. The national archetype must change his character to conform to changing national purpose. It has been said that the cross of Christ would have been disagreeably out of place in this parade. Uncle Sam, as we used to know him, was almost equally discordant.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 4

By Frank C. Hanighen January 26, 1949

OPPOSITION: Little premonitory signs, no bigger than a ticket to the inaugural stands, have begun to appear on Capitol Hill, possible forerunners of trouble for the Administration. True, "Uncle Joe Cannon" Rayburn runs his show in the House with an iron hand, symbol of "steamroller democracy". But in the Senate it is somewhat different. At first the green light for the Truman program shone bravely and steadily -- for a few days. Then, on January 18, a yellow light appeared, winked once, and disappeared. In the classic parliamentary way, Southerners served a reminder -- on a wholly unimportant issue -- to the Executive that they could exert their power whenever they wished. It was on a vote for allowing tax exemption for inaugural tickets. Six Southern Senators crossed the aisle to ballot with the Republicans to defeat the bill. Just a wink of the yellow, presaging a turn to red.

Crossing the aisle is no inconsiderable threat in the Upper Chamber where the Administration forces have a much smaller margin than in the House. And on Labor legislation it can work harm to the Administration's elaborate tactics which are aimed at (1) holding the support of organized Labor, and (2) maintaining a number of features of that whipping boy, the Taft-Hartley Act. "To give the appearance of repealing Taft-Hartley, yet at the same time not to do so" -- that is the objective. A group of Southerners could jostle the Majority Leader right off his tightrope. Just now the contortions of those framing Labor legislation in committee remain uninterrupted. But what will happen when general debate commences on the floor?

Meanwhile the ghost of the Civil Rights program floats over the Upper Chamber. It was a smart political stunt for the President to turn his back on Governor Thurmond in the Inaugural parade. But he can't very well turn his back on Senator Maybank from Thurmond's state. The GOP minority are wickedly trying to start the Civil Rights controversy. But those who watch the corridors and lobbies say that the President's man, Les Biffle, is working energetically to keep the ghost away from the feast and to arrange a "deal".

It was, therefore, not at all surprising that his speech writers should hand Mr. Truman a script for his Inaugural act which dealt with matters far from Capitol Hill. There were safer subjects than, for instance, the presently rising curve of unemployment. So, having eschewed foreign policy and concentrated on the more fruitful domestic field during the election campaign, Mr. Truman on Inaugural day reversed these tactics and prudently directed the giddy minds of his festive listeners toward foreign quarrels.

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STOCKPILES: What is behind the proposal to develop backward areas of the world, the "bold new program" unfurled in the Inaugural address? Some observers -- and they are not being merely ironical -- claim that the program is simply a new Marshall Plan designed to rectify one of the major failures of the old Marshall Plan. These observers concede that there may also be political reasons prompting the proposal, but they insist that the real impetus comes from our economic experts who, strangely enough, want to obtain something concrete for the United States out of the foreign aid program. These experts have long been concerned about the need for further exploitation of the resources of Southern Asia and Africa. Some have been waspish enough to say that it would be far better if we diverted all funds from Europe and devoted them to building up the raw material production in the southern half of the

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globe. There, they emphasize, lie the stuffs upon which our industry is vitally dependent; Europe can provide virtually nothing which our industrial machine needs. It was this view which dictated the clause in the ERP act designed to permit American business to develop these southern areas on a larger scale than seems possible under the imperial restrictionism of European Powers.

But the little clause was honored in the breach rather than the occasion. The State Department fastidiously declined to "front" for American business in the chancelleries of European capitals. The ECA failed to put sufficient pressure on the European colonial Powers to relax their resistance to the admission of American business firms into their traditionally exclusive preserves. Meanwhile stockpiles of the strategic materials have failed to grow, and military experts have become anxious, because recently the chances for obtaining more of these materials have seemed even less favorable. For, as industrial recovery has made strides in Europe, the colonial Powers have been drawing these strategic materials to their own workshops and fewer come to our shores. Hence, the call for more Pelion on more Ossa, the President's "bold new plan".

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TRADE OR DUMPING? The annual sermons on the sacredness of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements are flowing from the official pulpits. The 80th Congress sought to retain some power for the Legislative body over another Executive-directed program. Now, the 81st Congress is asked to reverse its predecessor's work and to eliminate the safeguards enacted last year. While no one questions the philosophy of free trade which is liberally invoked in this matter, it would be naive to overlook the Executive's appetite for more power. This feeling is strengthened by an analysis which we have received from a friend. He has spent his career in the study of American trade and tariff problems. "The extension of the Trade Agreement Act", he writes us, "is now practically meaningless because we will have nothing left to trade. In fact, even in the past the foreign duty concessions we have obtained under it have been mostly nullified by embargoes, quotas, and exchange controls imposed by our trade partners. Why have we not been swamped with many classes of foreign goods under the extreme wage differentials and the leveling of tariffs? The first reason is war destruction and demoralization in foreign industries. This is now being overcome. The second reason is that our Military Governments in Japan and Germany, our principal competitors, must approve the minimum prices at which Japan and Germany are allowed to export. Our Military Governments see to it that Japan and Germany do not offer us any serious competition in the American market even under the Trade Agreement tariffs. In order to effectuate our liberal free-trade theories, we must continue, at great expense, to govern those great countries as United States dependencies and surpress their natural trade. This will eventually throw them into the arms of Russia.

"The United States is now spending about half a billion dollars a year to remove agricultural surpluses from the United States market. . . . But even while we have sought to remove this market surplus we have lowered or are lowering the customs duties on the same, so that foreign countries could unload their surpluses on our already over-supplied market. One of our principal objectives in the European Recovery Program is to induce Western European nations to exchange their products with one another. For example, Italy produces cheese, oranges, lemons, cherries, nuts, tomatoes and other vegetables which we think she ought to exchange for Swedish cutlery, tools and other metal products and for Finnish plywood, paper, matches and the like. The United States produces an abundant supply of all these articles to cover its own needs. We do not need more. The European countries should mutually exchange their surpluses of these goods. But instead of using pres-

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sure to cause such an exchange, we nullify any efforts made in this direction by lowering the U. S. duties on these same items so that the European countries can ship their surpluses to us, who do not want them, instead of to each other."

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FEDERAL UNION: It would not be surprising if that hardy perennial, the United States of Europe, were to bloom in fresh color this year. The matter is now bogged down in European capitals. The Continental governments generally support such an organization; but the British Government remains cool. Some Administration Senators are now proposing to give the dream of a United States of Europe new life. They argue that there must be some move towards political union in Europe before there can be real economic union. Economic nationalism (quotas, currency controls, trade restrictions) now prevents the exchange of goods and impedes real recovery. The best way to eliminate these barriers, they say, is a political union where the selfish interest of each State could be fused by parliamentary process into an overall interest -- that of Europe. As the Senators see it, no real progress in European recovery will be made until this is done; and until then, American aid will remain merely a wasteful dole.

But, how can Britain be brought into line? Well, the British Labor Government is now on the last lap politically, for the general election comes in 1950. The Labor Government would hardly care to face this test, unless U. S. funds continue. Ergo, the British leaders would be in no position to resist, if the State Department were to put pressure on Messrs. Attlee and Bevin to support wholeheartedly the formation of a political union. As for Congress, while it will probably vote ERP funds this session, the process would be helped if a clause were attached to the act stipulating that the recipient nations should establish a political Western union. There are rumors that Senator Fullbright will sponsor some such proposal.

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NATIONALIZATION: In recent numbers, we have dwelt on the efforts to put over Socialism under the guise of "Free Enterprise", and described, in the case of the steel industry, how the Federal Government "managerial class" is mapping this course. The strategy of the same class in Britain is similar. Time and Tide, conservation London weekly, (January 15) discloses the blueprint in the offices of the Whitehall planners. Noting that the Labor Party government is playing down the demand for nationalization, Time and Tide remarks that "State ownership of the iron and steel industry . . . would destroy the fiction that 80 per cent of industry remains in private hands. The State can creep in at the back door of any industry through development councils, the control of investment and raw materials and the 'socialization of industrial relations'.

"How true it is to say that nationalization is now a secondary issue. Imagine the situation of a private enterprise industry after another five years of Socialist rule. It is in fee to a development council, it is sown with 'model factories' run by the State, it is beholden to the State for its raw materials, it must win the approval of the State for the use to which it puts whatever money is left to it after taxation, and it must contrive to manage its factories and workshops on a sort of multitiered system, through a nexus of advisory, consultative and administrative joint bodies. Such is the freedom of initiative in private enterprise as envisaged by 'progressive' Socialists. The neat draught of nationalization nearly killed the patient, so the next must be diluted and disguised. The Socialist manifesto of the future does not require a single new nationalization project. The backroom boys can get all they want without it. If the Labor Party is returned to power a second time nothing can alter the permanent and inalterable trend of Socialism towards the all-powerful State and away from the traditional British conception of individual liberty and responsibility."

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Book Events

Federal Prose: How to Write in and/or for Washington, by James B. Masterson and Wendell Brooks Phillips. Chapel Hill, N. C. The University of North Carolina Press. $1.25. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

About four years ago Mr. Maury Maverick, exasperated by the difficulty of abstracting any sense from the reports and memoranda that were placed on his desk, produced an inspired piece of onomatopoesis that seems certain to find its way into the dictionaries. Mr. Maverick was then head of the Committee on Smaller War Plants and his staff was comprised largely of lawyers and economists. He described the literary idiom employed by these and other Government experts as "Gobbledygook", because, as he explained afterwards, it sounded like the chatter of turkey cocks and contained about the same quantum of meaning. It was at this time that Mr. Maverick issued his celebrated edict, promising that any employee of his committee who ventured thereafter to use such passives as "integration" and "implementation" would be shot forthwith. Dr. Rudolph Flesh, a Viennese, was engaged to instruct the writers of Government bulletins and directives in the use of the language to which they were supposed to be native; now Mr. Maverick is back in Texas, Dr. Flesh has been retained by one of the great news services to teach its editors and rewrite men how to say what they mean, while in Washington bureaucratic literature proceeds to new triumphs of confusion.

Gobbleygook of course is by no means a phenomenon peculiar to Washington. It has many expert practitioners in England where the eminent wit, Mr. A. P. Herbert, has made an effort as valiant and as vain as Mr. Maverick's to check its influence. The truth is that Gobbledygook derives its characteristics partly from tendencies evident in the language as a whole and partly from the very nature of Government. Various factors have been blamed for the extravagances of bureaucratic prose including popular education which has enormously enlarged the proportion of learned imbeciles to the whole community. I am satisfied, however, that the real explanation is merely the deliberate or unconscious desire of the writers to conceal or distort what is actually in their minds. In this respect bureaucratic literature resembles the literature of advertising. Gobbledygook has always been the professional idiom of diplomacy. Governments speak of "sanctions", or holy things, when they mean the business of starving people to death by blockades or other devices; of "implementations of policy", when they seek to frighten a weaker adversary by the threat of war. Similarly, they now speak of "manpower mobilization" when they mean enforced servitude or State-slavery, and of "protective custody" to describe illegal arrests, imprisonment without trial, torture and political murder. But because such names, however deceptive in the first instance, rapidly acquire evil connotations they must be constantly revised and the ambiguity or irrelevance of word to referent increased.

The special syntax, grammar and vocabulary of Gobbledygook afford the Messrs. Masterson and Phillips an opportunity for a good deal of amusing satire, since it enables them to approach it as if it were a language entirely independent of the Indo-European family. Their little book, which imitates the form and method of popular works on how to avoid vulgar errors in English, merely reverses the principles set forth by Dr. Flesh in The Art of Plain Talk. It shows the reader how to avoid pronouns, how to use nouns as verbs, how to confuse his prepositions, how to avoid the active voice, and how to keep the relationships of subjects, predicates and complements in a state of pompous anarchy. As I say, this book is not likely to have much effect one way or another on Government prose, but it should be highly useful to anyone who wishes to keep his own diction free of political corruptions.

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